Dear Chicagoans:

Good environmental management is good for business, and good business development can also benefit the environment. Nowhere is this more true than for the Calumet region on Chicago's southeast side.

For over a century, the Calumet region has contributed to the prosperity of Chicago. It manufactures and processes products essential for industry and in the everyday lives of citizens. It serves as North America's busiest hub for intermodal transportation.

Today, opportunities are ripe for revitalizing the Calumet area. In a city where large tracts of vacant industrial land are needed but scarce, the Calumet area retains well over 1,000 acres suitable for manufacturing and other businesses. Almost 60 percent of land in Chicago that is available for industry can be found here.

This industrial land exists side-by-side with Chicago's most important wetlands. Approximately 4,000 acres are to be managed as the Calumet Open Space Reserve.

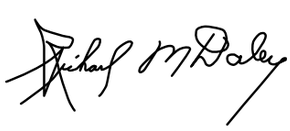
Prompted by enormous opportunities for both industrial revitalization and for protection of important open space, the Department of Planning and Development (DPD) initiated the creation of the *Calumet Area Land Use Plan*, to determine appropriate land uses. DPD partnered with the City's Department of Environment and three non-government organizations, the Southeast Chicago Development Commission, Openlands Project, and the Calumet Area Industrial Commission. A U.S. Environmental Protection Agency sustainable development challenge grant and a grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service helped fund the plan's development, and the development of the *Calumet Open Space Reserve Plan* and the *Calumet Design Guidelines*.

Simultaneously, DPD is implementing an industrial Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district for the region. The TIF will help provide financial incentives for industry to locate in the Calumet area, and is key to the implementation of the land use plan. Over one-third of the 3,000 acres of industrial land will be available for redevelopment, which could potentially create close to 7 million square feet of new industrial space.

Today the era of decline is ending and it's possible to see what a new era will look like. Chicagoans will regain access to wild lands and restored landscapes that were unavailable for public use for half a century. New industries will spring up in the Lake Calumet area bringing new jobs and tax revenue.

With careful planning and management, we can bring back Calumet's natural beauty and industrial strength. It is with great hope for the future that I present to you the *Calumet Area Land Use Plan.*

Sincerely,



Richard M. Daley
Mayor

Calumet Area Land Use Plan

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City of Chicago
Department of Planning and Development

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

Calumet Area Industrial Commission

City of Chicago
Department of Environment

Openlands Project

Southeast Chicago Development Commission

Understanding Calumet: A Land of Smoke and Water

From the Chicago Skyway bridge, drivers see one of the most dramatic views in Chicago:

Blue mountains of road salt or black mountains of coal lie heaped along the straight channel of the Calumet River. Enormous vehicles move among the mountains, loading salt or coal into the beds of waiting trucks. Behind the piles of minerals rests a vast, flat landscape punctuated by gray roofs and smoke stacks. Stately herons and pure white egrets fly over the man-made mountains and between the smoke stacks, at home in a strange land.

Beneath this view—a scene most people experience for mere seconds as they drive by—is a remarkable story of a land, its people and industries. The *Calumet Area Land Use Plan* examines the region's past and how this odd juxtaposition of industry and nature came to be. And more importantly, the Plan sets the stage for the region's future, determining best uses for the land and water during the century we're only now beginning.

LANDSCAPE AND WATERWAYS

Chicago Skyway and the Waddell and Harrington Lift Bridge over the Calumet River.

Fourteen thousand years ago, the upper portion of the Lake Michigan basin was still occupied by the Wisconsin glacier. At the southern end lay a body of water geologists call "Lake Chicago." What is now Lake Calumet was part of this vast glacial lake.

The depth and reach of Lake Chicago rose and fell—the water would have been 60 feet higher than today's lake level. What is now the Windy City was not windy at all, but rather wet, for all of Chicago lay submerged in cold water.

About 12,000 years ago, the glacial margin began to creep far enough northward up Michigan's lower peninsula to allow Lake Chicago to drain eastward toward the Atlantic Ocean. The level of the glacial lake rose and sank, depending on whether ice blocked its drainage in any given year, but eventually much of the lake drained away to the sea. What remained was stabilized in the coming millennia into Lake Michigan's current bed. Meanwhile, Lake Calumet was left behind as a lake unto itself, as was Wolf Lake.

When Joliet and Marquette traveled through the area in the 1600s, the Calumet area was flat, grassy and wet. It varied from stretches of relatively dry prairies on slight ridges, to sedge meadows and marshes in low swales, to the open water of the lakes and seasonal ponds. During wet seasons with high water levels, shallow rivers coursed through the vegetation. Water and land graded gently into one another, and rigid channels that now define the area's rivers and streams didn't exist. A tall person could have waded the entire one-mile length down the center of Lake Calumet, for the lake was only three to six feet deep.

Names for landmarks of the area reveal its early history. For example, Stony Island Avenue received its name because it was a high, dry limestone ridge that cut across marshy prairies. (Stony Island's ridge is a truly ancient geological feature, an exposed coral reef left over from a time when tropical seas covered the region 400 million years ago.)[1] The name "Calumet" is believed to have been a Potawatomi word for "low body of deep, still water," but it might well have meant something else or have come from some other source now lost. The word was spelled in wildly different ways on early maps: Kennomic, Callimink, Calamic, and so on. Today's spelling of "Calumet" doesn't appear on maps until 1864.[2]

Over the past 125 years the bodies of water and the overall hydrology of the Calumet area have been altered dramatically. As some bodies of water were being filled up, other portions of Lake Calumet and the rivers were being dredged to make them navigable for deeper draft vessels. Beginning in 1876, the Calumet River channel was straightened, and during construction of Burns Ditch in 1926, the Little Calumet River was straightened as well. These and other changes shifted the natural drainage of the Calumet area from Lake Michigan back the opposite way toward the Illinois River.

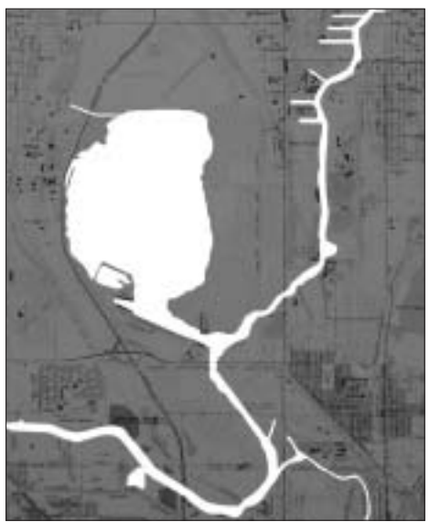
Today lakes and marshes have been filled in with slag and other waste materials to the point where some no longer exist. Lake Calumet itself used to extend to 98th Street and Woodlawn. But about a quarter of the lake has been transformed into land, and today the water's edge is south of 103rd street.[3] Some portions of Lake Calumet reach a depth of 30 feet, as compared with its natural six feet. (Twenty-seven feet is minimum depth of navigable waters for international trade.)

These illustrations show the changing shape of Lake Calumet based on maps from the U.S. Geological Survey.

Lake Calumet, 1901

Lake Calumet, 1930

Lake Calumet, 1960



Lake Calumet, 2000

1 Wiggers, Raymond. Author of *Geology Underfoot in Illinois,* 1997. (Mountain Press Publishing Company, Missoula, Montana.1997.) Written comments on *Calumet Land Use Plan*, provided April 25, 2000.

2 "Proposed Calumet National Heritage Area: Today's Vision,Tomorrow's Inspiration." Published by Calumet Ecological Park Association, funded by National Park Service. March,1999.

3 Cunningham, Lynne. President, Southeast Chicago Development Commission. Presentation to Graham Foundation, November 1997.

Workers laid tracks through Hyde Lake to connect Chicago's East Side neighborhood with Hegewisch in 1915. *Courtesy of Southeast Historical Society.*

TRANSPORTATION

From the 1840s to the 1950s, the Calumet area's economy benefited from ever-improving transportation. Its role as a transportation hub was a strong attraction for industry. In 1848, the Illinois & Michigan Canal opened nearby, connecting Lake Michigan to the Illinois River, which flows into the Mississippi River. This water passage, which connected the Great Lakes for the first time with the Gulf of Mexico, fostered an enormous boom in population and commerce in the Chicago region.

In the 1850s, the first steel rails and wooden ties of railroads were laid across the Calumet landscape. Between 1850 and 1900, nine railroad companies laid track through the area, connecting the Chicago region with the southern and eastern United States. Today, so much rail has been laid that the Calumet area is North America's largest center for intermodal freight shipping.[4]

In the mid-20th century, interstate highways were constructed for auto and truck traffic. Interstate 94, which runs from Billings, Montana to Detroit, forms a western boundary to the region covered by this land use plan. Interstate 90, which runs from Seattle to Boston, is on the east. And interstates 80, 55, 57, and 65 are all within 10 miles.

In the 1950s, great optimism for commerce accompanied the opening of the St. Lawrence Seaway, a waterway built to allow ocean-going vessels to pass from the Atlantic Ocean to the Great Lakes. Tremendous growth was anticipated for Chicago's port. The Illinois International Port District was established. The Port of Chicago at Lake Calumet Harbor and Iroquois Landing on Lake Michigan were expected to become major international ports. Substantial funds were invested in port development. But the sharp increase in traffic never occurred. The technology of ocean shipping changed around that time, and much larger ships began to be used. At the same time, unit trains—freight trains with permanently coupled cars that transport coal, grains and other products across the continent without stopping—began to provide an alternative to water transport.

Today the ports are largely receiving ports for coal and other bulk materials. The Port of Chicago ranks 28th in shipping traffic of all U.S. ports.[5]

4 Arthur Andersen. *Calumet Implementation/Action Plan*. Submitted to: City of Chicago Department of Planning and Development. May, 1999.

5 Arthur Andersen.

Native Americans traveled through the Calumet area for thousands of years before European-Americans began to build their factories here.

The first private business to open in the area in the early 1800s was a toll bridge across the Calumet River at 92nd and Houston. It was the first of what would be many commercial enterprises in the area.

Stephen A. Douglas was the first land owner in the area. He sold his holdings on the east side of Lake Calumet to James Brown, a man credited with being the founder of South Chicago. (Lake Calumet Harbor was once called South Chicago Harbor.)[6] The holdings on the west side of the lake were sold to George Pullman, the manufacturer of Pullman railroad cars. By 1884, Pullman's railroad car plant and model town were completed along the Illinois Central railroad tracks. Once separate, Pullman became part of Chicago in 1889 after labor strikes forced the company to divest itself of the town.[7]

The region was a natural for pig iron and steel production, with Chicago a destination both for ships carrying iron ore from the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, and for trains carrying coal, which by the 1860s was arriving in large quantities from southern Illinois.[8] John Brown's Iron and Steel Mill at 119th Street was the first mill built in the region. Brown was followed by U.S. Steel in South Chicago in 1881 and Wisconsin Steel in South Deering. These towns are now part of Chicago, for the Lake Calumet area was annexed into the city in 1886. But at the time when the towns were new, it was a given that a man working at U.S. Steel lived in South Chicago, and a man working at Wisconsin Steel lived in South Deering. The fortunes of mills and towns were inextricably linked. Throughout most of the 1900s, the steel industry was the dominant force that shaped both land use and culture in the Calumet area.

By 1928, new industries were springing up a little farther from the lake. By then, road and rail transportation had improved and it was easier to be located away from the waterways. Soap, paints, chemicals, cement and other products were manufactured in the region, but the dominant industry was steel and businesses associated with steel production.[9]

Thousands of immigrants were drawn to the United States to fill the jobs offered in the Calumet area. Workers arrived from many different countries and from other parts of the U.S. making the region ethnically diverse. This rich mix of cultures and people continues today.

By the mid-1970s, the steel-producing industry in the Calumet area began to falter. Alternatives to steel, such as aluminum for cans and plastics for automobile interiors, increased in popularity. America's phase of steel-intensive development—such as the erecting of buildings and bridges and laying of rail lines—slowed down. Many necessary pieces of the nation's infrastructure were already established. At the same time as demand for steel decreased, the amount of scrap metal available increased. "Mini-mills," where steel is melted down and recast, became more competitive than large mills producing steel from raw ore.[10] By 1982, the bottom fell out of the steel industry and people and Southeast Side communities suffered a major blow from which they still haven't recovered. Mills closed. Thousands of people lost their jobs. Residents who stayed had less money to patronize businesses, and many stores and restaurants closed up shop, causing a further loss of jobs. Other people lost their jobs because they worked for suppliers to the mills; for example, a small paint store lost a half million dollars worth of business when Wisconsin Steel closed because the store had a side business of cutting glass for the mill.[11]

A storage facility, one of the few remaining artifacts from the former U.S. Steel plant. The land is located directly on Lake Michigan's shoreline.

6 Cunningham.
7 U.S. Department of Interior, National Park Service. *Calumet Ecological Park Feasibility Study,* August, 1998.
8 Cronin, William. *Nature's Metropolis.* W.W. Norton Company, 1991. p.312
9 Cunningham.
10 Schorsch, Louis, Principal at McKinsey & Co. Interview with author, April 25, 2000.
11 Cunningham.

In the late 1920s, large amounts of waste began to be dumped in the area. Licensed landfills didn't yet exist, nor did regulations related to garbage disposal. In the absence of technologies to lessen the impact of trash upon the land or the community, liquid wastes were poured directly into waterways. Solid refuse was deposited on top of earth. While some was benign, much was not. Fly ash left over from burning Illinois coal, for example, contains trace amounts of uranium. Over 130 years of industry has exposed the region to a wide range of contaminants, including polychlorinated biphenols (PCBs), a compound now known to be linked to cancer.[12] Around this time, municipal waste was also trucked in and dumped, and the Calumet area became a major repository for Chicago's garbage.

The Waste Management of Illinois CID Recycling and Disposal Facility.

In addition, years of steel manufacturing added the most plentiful waste problem in the form of slag, the fused-together aggregate of minerals left over from steel making. Enormous amounts of slag were used to fill in lakes, including the shoreline of Lake Michigan, and some was re-used in cement and fertilizer production. But much of the slag was dumped out onto whatever open space was convenient, making it difficult for plants to grow.

Molten slag used to be disposed of by dumping it onto open ground; this practice continued into the 1950s. Today slag is the most common form of waste problem in the Calumet area. *Photo courtesy of Southeast Historical Society.*

12 U.S. EPA. *A Preliminary Environmental Assessment of Contamination.* February, 1988.

RECREATION

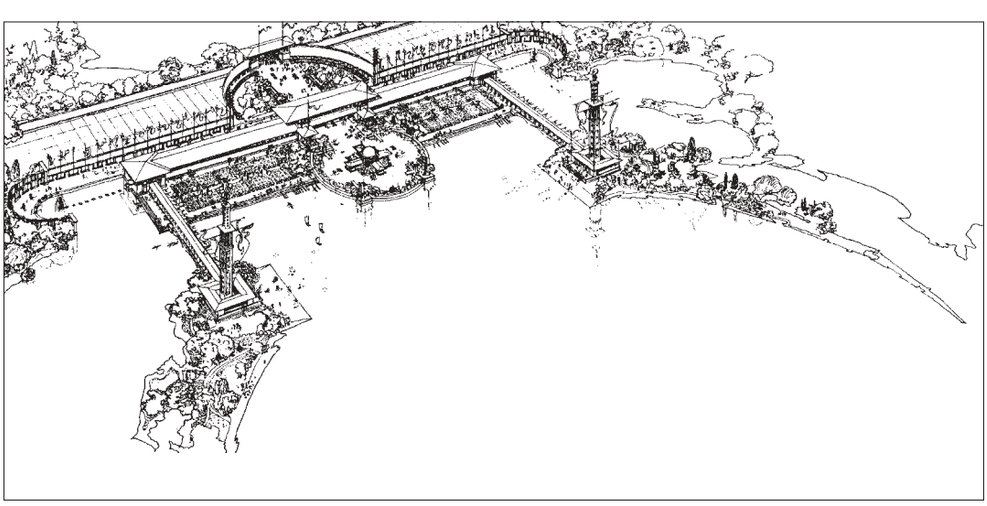
In the late 1800s, the region was bustling with hotels, social clubs, and various commercial enterprises. Industry continued to grow. Most businesses were clustered along the river and along the west side of Lake Calumet, and though population had increased, it didn't approach the boom of neighborhoods adjacent to downtown. Lake Calumet was so sparsely populated that the area enjoyed a reputation for excellent hunting, fishing and recreation. Up until the 1860s, residents hunted for sustenance, but in coming decades, hunting turned to sport.

East of Avenue M between 131st and 132nd streets is the Southeast Sportsmen's Club. Private clubs for fishing and hunting were once common in the Calumet area

Because it took only an hour to travel by rail from downtown, well-to-do businessmen set up private hunting reserves. Woodman's Tavern and Douglas's Duck Pond were prominent sporting retreats on land now occupied by the Acme Coke plant. In 1938, the Southeast Sportsmen's Club was established in Hegewisch, and it still exists today.[13]

Residents of Chicago's North Side traveled to Lake Calumet to vacation. Architect Dankmar Adler, one of the founders of the "Chicago School of Architecture," was one noteworthy figure who spent summers at Lake Calumet.[14] In warm months, there was swimming and sailing. George Pullman sponsored regattas and a crew team. Rowboats could be rented from "Bohemian Joe Dvorak's" shop. In the winter there was skating and ice sailing on the lake.

In 1898, Frank Lloyd Wright designed a recreational facility for Wolf Lake. Though it was never constructed, this "amusement resort" included a band stand, a circular track and field, boat houses, bathing pavilions, gardens and a covered pergola with seating to watch races and festivals. The illustration for it shows the throngs of people expected to use and enjoy such a facility.



An amusement resort designed for Wolf Lake by Frank Lloyd Wright.

Photo courtesy of
The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation
Copyright © 2001.

13 Cunningham.
14 Cunningham.

Today's *Calumet Area Land Use Plan* is not the first attempt to conceptualize a future for the Calumet area.

In 1909, Daniel Burnham addressed the Calumet River and Lake Calumet specifically in his *Plan of Chicago*:

> "The Calumet is an ample stream, and on every hand the silhouettes of steel industries give strong evidence of the coming importance of this channel as a harbor. Every effort, therefore, should be made to concentrate the vehicle traffic crossing this river at well-chosen points where great bridges might be constructed, in order to create as little friction as possible between the vessel and land traffic."
>
> "On the banks of the Calumet, in the neighborhood of One Hundred and Third Street, are large swamps capable of being developed into fine parks; the country is gently undulating, with plenty of woodland, and the view across Calumet Lake is fine."
>
> "It is proposed to create a driveway around Lake Calumet, and to reclaim the low lands south of the lake without essentially changing their present topography; also to plant a belt of woods surrounding this lake park set in one of the greatest manufacturing districts in the world; and to construct roadways to form connections with different park reservations and at the same time to become highways to the city."

Though Burnham's plan resulted in Chicago's protected lakefront for Lake Michigan and its grand parks and boulevards, the ideas for this part of the city were never realized. In fact, there has been no guiding principle for the design of Lake Calumet and its surroundings. The lake has been filled in or dredged as needed, and buildings and landfills have been constructed wherever parcels of land were available at the right price. Maps from the past 100 years show the changes in the shape of the lake from an even oval to today's odd configuration, as seen on page four.

In 1946, the City of Chicago's "Comprehensive City Plan" intended for the following 20 years, showed Lake Calumet transformed completely into "Lake Calumet Harbor" by 1965, with straight edges, a deep but narrow channel, and docking slips on either side. Less visible in the illustration shown here, the plan also envisioned all the land along banks of the Calumet River and other waterways as being used solely by industry, roads and railroads.

In the most recent two decades, two other big concepts were floated for Lake Calumet and the surrounding area. In the 1980s, the City of Chicago proposed the Calumet area as a site for the World's Fair. The illustration shows how Lake Calumet's shape would have been altered to create the fairgrounds.

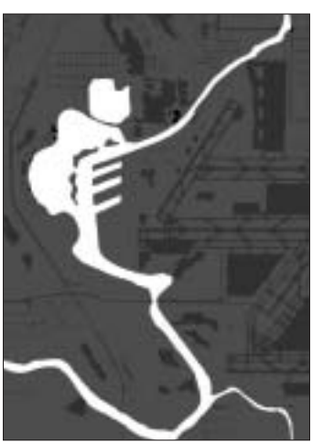
In 1990, the area was proposed to be the site of a third airport for the Chicago region. The Calumet River would have been redirected into Lake Calumet, and part of Wolf Lake would have been filled in. Many wetlands would also have been filled.

Burnham Plan, 1909

Comprehensive City Plan, 1946

World's Fair Plan, 1980s

Third Airport Plan, 1990



Lake Calumet Today

The economy and communities of the Calumet area are still recovering from the loss of the steel mills, even during America's recent period of prosperity. From 1992 to 1997, for example, employment in the U.S. grew by 13 percent and the City of Chicago grew by 6 percent. But during this national boom time, the Calumet area experienced a net loss of 2,000 jobs, mostly in the steel and steel processing industry.

Many properties in the area suffer from some level of environmental contamination. Roads are deteriorated and some are inadequate for the weight and frequency of truck traffic needed for bringing in supplies and removing products from industries.

Yet there's also a possibility to shape the property for industry's needs in a way that doesn't exist in other portions of the city. In the 1990s, private and public initiatives for urban industry focused elsewhere: Goose Island on the Chicago River, the Stockyards, and other areas. These areas are dense, and options for large scale industrial development are limited. But the Calumet area has vast acres of open land for industrial development. In fact, it has at least 13 sites totaling 1,000 acres to work with. This is by far the largest amount of vacant industrial land in the city.

Currently the Calumet area has had less than 20 percent of overall demand for space for industry, but it has almost 60 percent of land available for industrial use in Chicago.

A bright spot for industrial development is in the area's role as an intermodal center. Currently it is by far the largest intermodal center in the United States. Over 9 million containers a year are shipped in and out of the Calumet area—over twice that of any other U.S. metropolitan area. In the world, it is third only to Hong Kong and Singapore.

Another hopeful sign is that the region is ideal for creating new power generating facilities. It has sufficient acres, unit train and barge transportation for fuel, gas line and co-generation sources, and existing plants that could be expanded.

Even with a 30 to 40 percent reduction in the amount of steel produced, the area of southeast Chicago and northwest Indiana remains the nation's largest steel producing and processing region by a wide margin. Efforts at improving the region's economy must continue to support this important segment of the economy.

The other strength of the Calumet area is not economic but ecological. The bird life in the Calumet area is very rich, and the vastness of the wetlands and open spaces makes the Calumet area exceptional within Chicago.

Planning for the Calumet Area Today

EVOLUTION OF LAND USE PLAN

In May, 1998, *CitySpace: An Open Space Plan for Chicago* was adopted. A joint project of the City of Chicago, Chicago Park District and the Forest Preserve District of Cook County, the plan singled out Lake Calumet as being by far the most significant wetland and natural area within the city, and in critical need of some form of protection.[15] Over 3,000 acres were also identified by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources as far back as the 1970s as being a natural area of statewide significance.[16]

The decline of industry and opportunities for employment in the Lake Calumet area have also been of concern since the 1970s. In 1999, Arthur Andersen's Real Estate Advisory Services Group prepared the *Calumet Area Implementation/Action Plan*, a report on how industrial development of the Calumet area could be accelerated. This report, commissioned by DPD, helped lay the groundwork for the *Calumet Area Land Use Plan.*

Also in 1999, a $200,000 sustainable development challenge grant from U.S. EPA was received to produce the *Calumet Area Land Use Plan*. DPD, Department of Environment (DOE), the nonprofit organizations Openlands Project, the Southeast Chicago Development Commission and the Calumet Area Industrial Commission were partners in receiving the grant and in creating the plan. The grant was part of a nationally competitive grant program to assist communities in achieving sustainable futures.

Indian Creek flows through the new Ford facility. In addition to designing the site for its new industrial use, plans are in place to improve the quality of Indian Creek for fish and other aquatic life by creating ripples, meanders and other features of natural streams.

The first step was to collect all the existing maps and information about the area, which up until then had resided in the files and minds of many different organizations and individuals. Information from studies performed to assess the region's suitability for a third Chicago airport and from a study conducted by the National Park Service to determine the region's suitability for a National Heritage Corridor were among the critical pieces collected and processed.

As the plan took shape, the partners conducted presentations and focus groups to receive industry and community input. The Calumet Area Industrial Commission contributed to the plan's creation, and focus groups were conducted with environmental and community leaders recruited by Openlands Project and the Southeast Chicago Development Commission.

The process was positive and cooperative, with a high level of agreement about the vision for both open space and industry. As one of the focus group participants said when viewing the proposed land use maps, "This plan is a really good start. Now let's see it carried through to reality."

15 *CitySpace: An Open Space Plan for Chicago*.January, 1998. City of Chicago Department of Planning and Development, Chicago Park District, Forest Preserve District of Cook County. pp. 64-67.

16 *Illinois Natural Areas Inventory*. Prepared under contract to Illinois Department of Conservation by the Natural Land Institute (Rockford, Illinois) and Department of Landscape Architecture, University of Illinois at Urbana/Champaign. November1978.

Because the industries of Lake Calumet are in the unusual situation of being situated side by side with significant wildlife habitat, it is necessary to consider the future of both industry and nature together, in a comprehensive and synergistic land use plan.

It is also critical to consider Lake Calumet's placement as a central component of a much larger ecosystem and trail network. There have been proposals for a "Calumet National Heritage Area" that would wrap around the southwestern end of Lake Michigan, reaching from the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore on the east to the Illinois and Michigan Canal National Heritage Corridor on the west. The region's close association with northwest Indiana's industries, and the enormous industrial corridor that is created when the areas are considered together, is also significant.

Overall, during the planning process, DPD held in mind the vision of a landscape where industry and open space are intermingled, interconnected and to the greatest extent possible, co-existing harmoniously. Specific goals are listed below:

A. Guiding Goals for the Plan

1. Improve quality of life in the Calumet area and the surrounding communities by creating greater economic opportunity and enhanced environmental quality.
2. Retain and enhance existing businesses and industries within the Calumet area.
3. Attract new industrial and business development, and create new job opportunities.
4. Protect and enhance wetland and natural areas within the Calumet area, and improve habitat for rare and endangered species.

B. Action Objectives for the Plan

1. Visualize and enact a plan where large, viable tracts of land with excellent access to transportation can be assembled for industrial development.
2. Create a Calumet Open Space Reserve, with connected green spaces.
3. Develop effective design guidelines that encourage visually attractive buildings, industrial entrances, rights-of-way, and open spaces. Include river-edge and lakeside enhancements where possible, and emphasize natural landscaping and storm water management to enhance habitat for native plants and animals. Promote energy efficient and environmentally sustainable design and construction techniques.

C. Land Use Map

The land use map included in this document is intended to direct future development in the Calumet Area. Five major land uses are delineated:

1. *Industrial*.
2. *Public open space*—land owned by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Forest Preserve District of Cook County, Chicago Park District, City of Chicago, Illinois International Port District, Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which is managed or available for public recreation.
3. *Open space preservation*—land to be preserved primarily for habitat.
4. *Open space recreation*—land to be developed for public recreation. These sites will have an open space character and may include public facilities.
5. *Open space reclamation*—most of this land has been or is used for waste management purposes. These sites will have an open space character and may include public facilities for recreational, waste or water management or energy related purposes.

For most of the land use designations a consensus was reached among the partnership. However, Openlands Project proposes that the land south of 103rd Street on either side of the Norfolk and Southern Railroad (commonly known as Railroad Prairie and the southern portion of Van Vlissingen Prairie), and the northeast land pier in Lake Calumet (Slip 8) be designated for open space preservation.

Over 1,000 acres are well suited for future industrial development in the Calumet area. In most cases, proposed sites for industry were once occupied by other manufacturers. The same attributes that attracted former occupants still exist in these properties: good transportation and accessible, buildable locations.

In addition to providing transportation for raw materials and finished goods, roadways provide transportation for workers. And it's hoped that in the future, bikeways, pedestrian paths and existing train lines will provide transportation for commuting workers as well, making Calumet a truly sustainable and exemplary industrial district.

The Role of a TIF District in Implementing the Plan

Concurrently with the development of this plan, DPD has established a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district for the Calumet area, which was adopted by the Chicago City Council on December 13, 2000. TIF is a tool used by the City to finance redevelopment in underutilized or areas lagging in redevelopment activity. TIF enables the City to offer financial incentives to developers by drawing against revenues associated with increased property values. It also enables the City to assemble and consolidate land parcels to accommodate industrial development.

The site vacated by General Mills has excellent water, rail and road access, and is a good example of the type of industrial site available in the Calumet area.

The Calumet Industrial TIF covers roughly 12,000 acres, and is by far the largest TIF district ever created in Chicago. Approximately 4,600 acres are devoted to streets, alleys, rights-of-ways, and waterways. Another 1,500 acres consist of improved industrial properties. The remaining acreage is vacant.

TIF funds can be used for a number of pre-development activities, including acquisition of land, environmental remediation related to development and restoration, and the construction of public infrastructure, including open space.

Heavy Truck Route

To support industrial development, the *Calumet Area Land Use Plan* emphasizes the importance of implementing previous proposals that will improve routes for truck traffic. Seventy-six percent of industrial products shipped or received in the U.S. are transported by truck, making road improvements a critical component for success in retaining and attracting industry in the Calumet area. These include:

- Increasing the load capacity of existing streets and intersections from 80,000 pounds to 135,000 pounds. Currently Illinois regulations restrict weights to the lower amount, while Indiana regulations allow 135,000 pounds along a specially designated route. This creates logistical difficulties for transport of steel products and other materials between the two states, and is a major hindrance to Illinois industry. Increased load capacities will be accommodated by rebuilding the base of roads to increase the amount of weight trucks can carry, improving signals, changing the grade of a number of railroad tracks so tracks don't interfere with road traffic, and potentially allowing trucks to carry higher weights than what is currently permissible in Illinois.
- Completing an industrial road from Torrence Avenue to Avenue O at 126th Street to connect industry on both sides of the river at the southern end of Calumet River.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR OPEN SPACE: THE CALUMET OPEN SPACE RESERVE

For years, people have enjoyed nature's bounty in the Calumet area but have worried about its future. Now the City of Chicago and other agencies are committed to ensuring the protection of Calumet's valuable wetlands and its populations of wildlife in perpetuity.

Altogether, over 200 species of birds are known to visit the Calumet area annually. Sightings of herons, egrets, and other waterfowl during the summer months are common for anyone spending time in the Calumet area. More rarely seen but still present are mammals and reptiles, such as Franklin's ground squirrel and Blanding's turtle. The wildlife coupled with the enormous amount of vacant land make the Calumet area unparalleled in the city of Chicago in terms of its potential as a major nature reserve.

Approximately 4,000 acres of the Calumet area are slated to become part of the Calumet Open Space Reserve, a matrix of open lands to be used for preservation and in some cases, recreation. These lands represent important wetland habitats, lakes and streams. Though birds will continue to nest, roost and forage for food on private properties, the acres designated as open space will be assured protection.

Within the land use plan, existing open spaces are connected when possible. The goal is to create an interconnected web of open spaces, called the Calumet Open Space Reserve, which makes lands more valuable for recreation since in some cases trails will be developed. But it also makes them ecologically more valuable. When parcels of open space are connected to one another by bands of green, natural land (called "greenways") it becomes possible for wildlife to move from one area to another. Eventually a more detailed plan for bike and pedestrian paths will need to be created, keeping in mind both recreational needs and the potential for providing transportation routes for employees of industries and other businesses in the Calumet region.

Ownership

The plan proposes the addition of over 2,500 acres to the existing 1,440 acres of protected wetlands and natural areas. The public open space will be managed cooperatively among local and state agencies.

One owner for much of the unprotected open land is the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR.) The mission of IDNR is the protection and management of Illinois' natural resources. The agency already owns the land around Wolf Lake, at the William Powers Conservation Area, and IDNR's Illinois Natural Areas Inventory designated many of Lake Calumet's wetlands as being land of statewide significance.

The Forest Preserve District of Cook County manages the largest amount of existing open space in the reserve, approximately 865 acres within three forest preserves. The plan recommends expanding existing forest preserves in the Calumet area.

The Illinois International Port District currently operates the Harborside International Golf Center, a 36-hole championship golf course. The 435-acre development contributes to the open space of the region.

Landfills

Landfills are also included as open space in the plan. Waste disposal facilities are a major feature of the landscape in the area, creating high mounds where land was once flat. Five major facilities—Paxton I, Paxton II, Land and Lakes, CID No. 1, CID No. 2—cover approximately 820 acres in the Calumet area.

Currently there's a moratorium on the acceptance of municipal waste at landfills in Chicago, except at Waste Management's CID Recycling and Disposal Facility at 130th and Jeffery, and the moratorium is expected to continue. Former landfills can be reclaimed as open space for recreation and habitat.

One other landfill has already been reclaimed, and is enjoying new life as the Harborside International Golf Center. Not all landfills can be developed for intensive recreational use, but Harborside gives inspiration as to landfills' possibilities.

Some landfills also have the potential to continue to generate revenue. The Chicago DOE is exploring the feasibility of recovering methane from landfills for use in generating electricity. This sort of facility would not impact the ability of landfills to continue to serve as open space, aesthetically and ecologically.

Conclusion

First there was nature's reign in the Calumet area. Then for 50 years after the first settlers, the area was a hunting and fishing paradise. Starting at the turn of the century came a seven-decade period of industrial construction and material prosperity. And then in the 1970s and up until now, there's been the difficult period of an industrial downturn.

Today the era of decline is ending, and it's possible to see what a new era will look like.

- **Neighborhood residents, local employees and visitors will regain access to wild lands and restored landscapes that were unavailable for public use for half a century.**

- **New industries will spring up in the Lake Calumet area. Old environmental problems will have been addressed, and new businesses will be constructed in ways that don't harm the environment and may actually help improve it through thoughtful landscape management practices, water control projects, and other means.**

- **New jobs and tax revenues from industry will bring fresh prosperity to communities surrounding them.**

- **Former landfills will have been transformed into hilly prairies, where bobolinks can nest and blazing stars can bloom. Bird populations throughout restored wetlands will increase and flourish.**

- **People will arrive by bike, car, train or bus to visit significant sites that celebrate the area's industrial and labor history, to view the birds and other natural resources, and to fish. Tourism will bring both income and pride to the region.**

The site of the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District's aeration station, which increases the oxygen content of the Calumet River and improves water quality. The Ford plant can be seen here on the left.

The Calumet area hasn't quite reached that new era, but groundwork is being laid. Environmental and infrastructure problems are being addressed and solved. The current era is one where the proper plans, policies, financing vehicles and other incentives are being established to make a prosperous future possible for Lake Calumet.

It is in this spirit and with this vision that the City of Chicago has created the *Calumet Area Land Use Plan*—as one significant step toward a brighter future.

Calumet Area Land Use Plan

Produced by
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Chicago, IL 60602
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Note: This document is one of three pertaining to land use in the Calumet Region. Others published as part of this same planning effort include the *Calumet Open Space Reserve Plan* and *Calumet Design Guidelines*. These two documents are both available by contacting the Department of Planning and Development.

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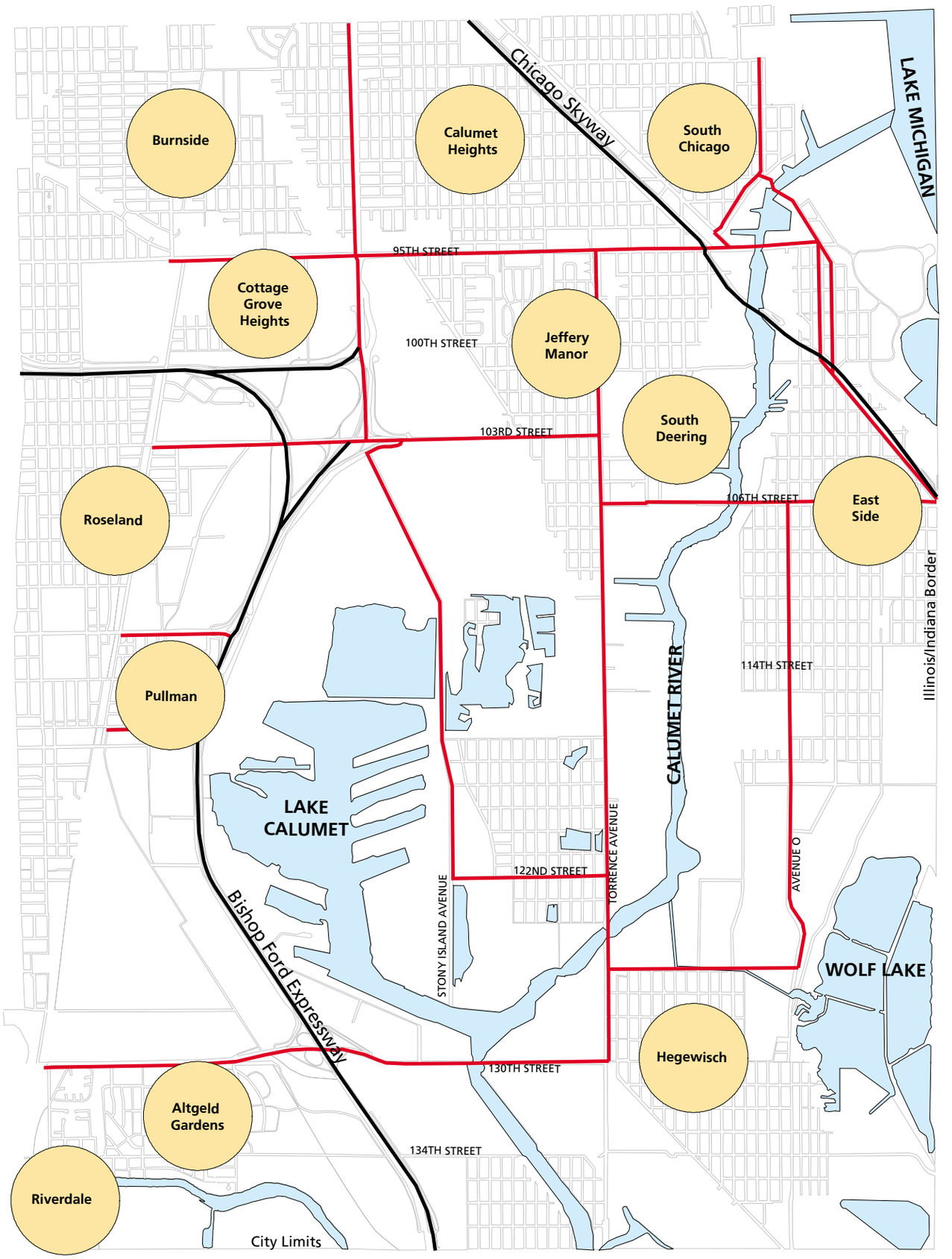
Chicago Neighborhoods in the Calumet Area



LEGEND

Neighborhoods

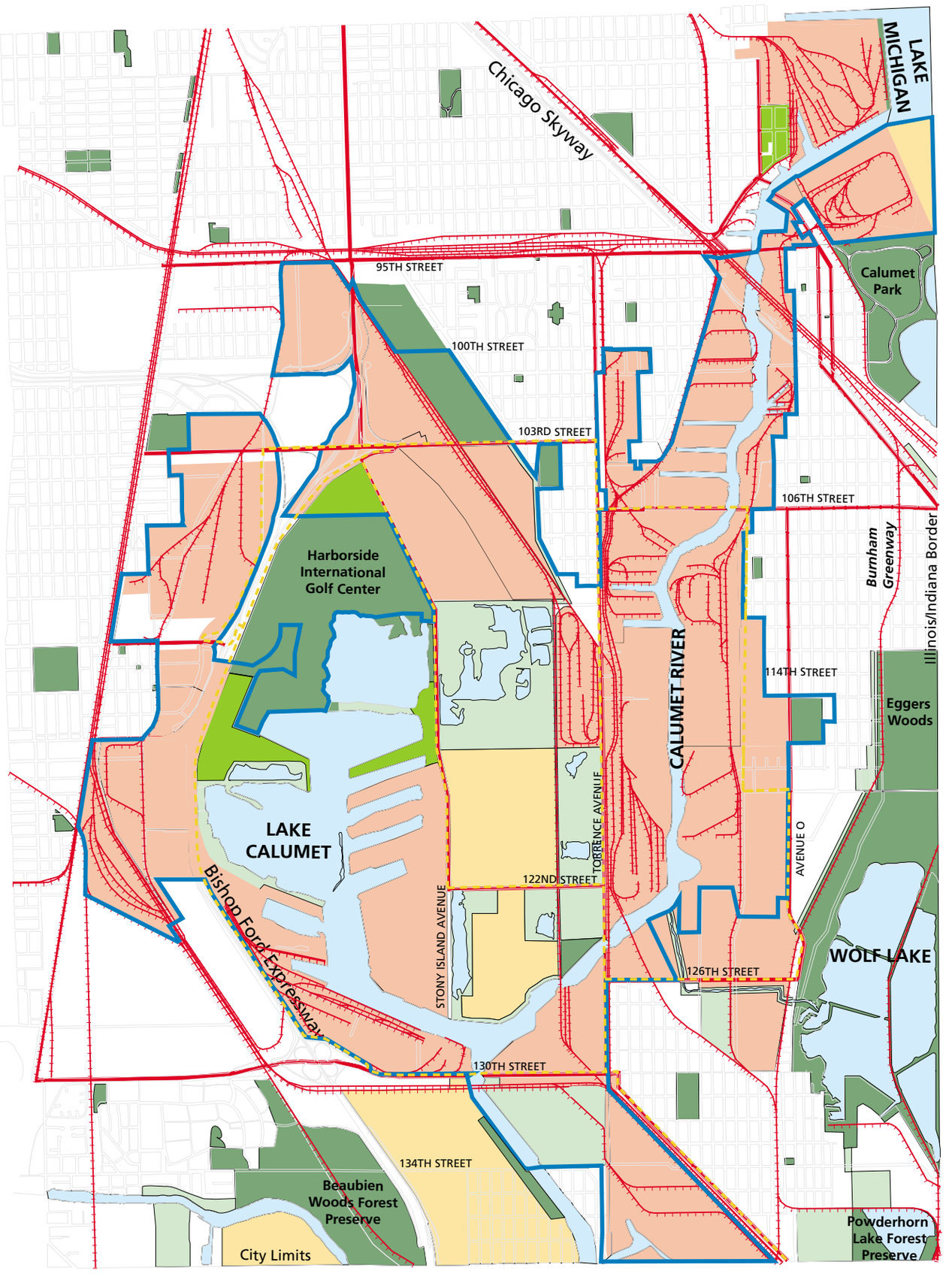
Acreage calculations are for planning purposes only. The calculations are not based on platted survey information.

NORTH

0 750' 1500' 3000' 6000'

50 ACRES

Calumet Area Land Use Map



LEGEND

- Industrial
- Public Open Space
- Heavy Truck Route
- Open Space Preservation
- Open Space Recreation
- Open Space Reclamation
- Major Roadways
- Railroads
- Calumet Tax Increment Finance Area

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Approved by the Chicago Plan Commission February 14, 2002.

NORTH

0 750' 1500' 3000' 6000'

50 ACRES